

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 DHA-02 ORM-02 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00

NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-04 H-01

INR-07 L-03 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 /066 W

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FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2805

INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 2329

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: SHUM PINT KS

SUBJ: FURTHER REACTION TO MYONGDONG DECISION

REF: SEOUL 2304

1. SEOUL PUBLIC MEDIA REPORTED THAT PAK SE-KYUNG, CHIEF MYONGDONG DEFENSE LAWYER, STATED THAT HE WOULD SEEK TO REOPEN TRIAL. AS NOTED IN PREVIOUS EMBASSY REPORTING, REOPENING OF CASE IN WAKE OF SUPREME COURT DECISION VERY RARE AND IN THIS CASE UNLIKELY. ONE OF KIM TAE-CHUNG'S SECRETARIES COMMENTED TO EMBASSY THAT DEFENSE CAMP SAW NO PROSPECT FOR SUCCESS OF PLEA FOR REOPENING CASE, BST THOUGHT GESTURE MIGHT JUST ES WELL BE MADE.
2. GENERAL PUBLIC HAS REACTED CALMLY TO DECISION. SOME OBSERVERS SUGGEST THAT PUBLIC MIGHT HAVE BEEN UPSET IF OLDER DEFENDANTS HAD BEEN JAILED PROMPT ROKG ANNOUNCEMENT THAT THREE MEN OVER SEVENTY YEARS OF AGE AND TWO WOMEN WOULD NOT SERVE SENTENCES CREDITED WITH SOOTHING PUBLIC CONCERN ACCORDING THESE OBSERVERS.
3. EMBASSY HAS CHECKED VARIOUS CAMPUSES DURING DAY, BUT UNIVERSITY STUDENTS HAVE NOT DEMONSTRATED OVERT OPPOSITION

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TO DECISION AS YET. BLUE HOUSE FOREIGN AFFAIRS SECRETARY KIM KYONG-WON COMMENTED TO VISITING STANFORD PROFESSOR HARRY ROWEN AND PLOCOUNS THAT CONCERNS REGARDING U.S. TROOP WITHDRAWALS IS HAVING POLITICALLY UNIFYING EFFECT THROUGHOUT COUNTRY AND HAS BEEN FACTOR IN STUDENTS' KEEPING THEIR HEADS DOWN.

4. ASIDE FROM HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISTS WHOSE REACTIONS WERE REPORTED REFTEL, NDP CIRCLES ARE EXHIBITING MOST PUBLIC CONCERN OVER COURT RULING. CHONG IL-HYONG, ONE OF MORE RESPECTED AND WELL KNOWN MEMBERS OF PARTY AND HAD PLAYED A DECISIVE ROLE IN ELECTION OF YI CHOL-SUNG TO PARTY LEADERSHIP. CHONG'S CONVICTION AND LOSS OF ASSEMBLY SEAT HAS CALLED INTO QUESTION YI'S MIDDLE OF THE ROAD STRATEGY AND THE PARTY'S ALREADY TATTERED IMAGE AS A VIABLE OPPOSITION. NDP MEETINGS CONTINUE IN EFFORT TO IRON OUT A STAND IN RESPONSE TO CHONG'S SITUATION.
STERN

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Message Attributes

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